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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Secretary's Advisory
Committee for
Employees with
Disabilities

MP-1551

October 1998

A Time for Change

A Report of the USDA Secretary's Advisory Committee for Employees with Disabilities

USDA



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Dedication

This report is dedicated to Saundra King, founding President of the Association for Persons with Disabilities in Agriculture (APDA) and a Computer Specialist in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Information Technology Division. Saundra was a pioneer for the rights of persons with disabilities. Her diligence and selflessness, cheerful spirit, and caring will be missed by the entire USDA family. Saundra had the ability to reach out to people. It is definitely true that we would not have APDA had it not been for her drive and conviction. If one of the goals of living is to leave a legacy, Saundra King gave USDA a wonderful legacy in APDA.

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

I. Letter of Transmittal

October 6, 1998

Secretary Glickman,

The Secretary's Advisory Committee for Employees with Disabilities (SACED) is pleased to submit to you our report — A Time for Change. It is the first product of the SACED and represents a considerable effort by the committee and its subcommittees to gather information and create a baseline on current programs for people with disabilities and to develop plans for the future. The report also serves as the USDA response to President Clinton's Executive Order of March 13, 1998, establishing a National Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities.


Having gone through the process of developing this report, we are even more convinced of the necessity to change organizational culture to support accessibility, provide accommodations to ensure employee productivity, and maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of USDA programs and services nationwide. We wish to acknowledge and applaud your decisive action in appointing the SACED, and in responding to the recommendations in this report. As a common requirement in all programs and services, accessibility will ensure equal participation and benefit for all of our customers and employees.

We consider this report to be only the beginning of our efforts to make USDA the employer of choice and our efforts will continue, with products released as they become available. The SACED supports equal participation of employees and customers with disabilities in all USDA-sponsored programs, activities, and services. We look forward to joining with you and others in helping to fashion policies, programs, and partnerships to achieve equal access to affirmative employment, advancement, and services for people with disabilities at USDA.

Respectfully submitted by:



Michael V. Dunn, Co-Chair
Secretary's Advisory Committee for Employees with Disabilities



Having gone through the process of developing this report, we are even more convinced of the necessity to change organizational culture to support accessibility, provide accommodations to ensure employee productivity, and maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of USDA programs and services nationwide.


SACED Members and Departmental Program Advisors



Russ Ashworth



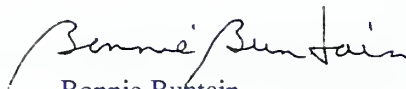
Kathryn P. Maloney



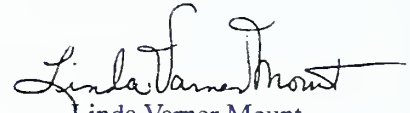
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Deborah Matz




Bonnie Buntain



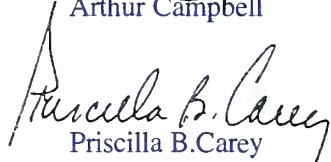
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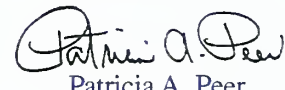
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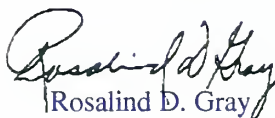
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II. Executive Summary

Introduction

Employees with disabilities are assured fair and equitable treatment and are to be held to the same standards as all other U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) employees. In June 1997, the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture established the Secretary's Advisory Committee for Employees with Disabilities (SACED), to provide input and focus on achieving equal access to affirmative employment, advancement, and services for people with disabilities at USDA.



The President signed an Executive Order on March 13, 1998, establishing a National Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities that will create a coordinated and aggressive national policy.


The committee structure reflects the highest level of executive leadership in USDA. Senior executives were appointed to serve on this committee from each mission area and Executive Office. Staff Directors from Departmental Administration serve as program advisors to the committee. SACED officials have the responsibility to recommend changes in policy to the Secretary to ensure accountability of managers with committee goals. The committee supports equal participation of employees and customers with disabilities in all USDA-sponsored programs, activities, and services. SACED is working to change the organizational culture so that accessibility is universal and accommodations ensure employee productivity to maximize efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of USDA programs and services nationwide.

Executive Order

The President signed an Executive Order on March 13, 1998, establishing a National Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities that will create a coordinated and aggressive national policy. This effort will bring working-age individuals with disabilities into gainful employment at a rate approaching that of the general adult population, and it supports the goals articulated in the Findings and Purpose sections of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. (See Appendix A for the White House Press Release and Text of the Executive Order.)

USDA's Approach

The committee established four subcommittees to collect data, perform process assessments, incorporate best practices and lessons learned, and ensure that all policies and processes ensure equal opportunity. The subcommittees addressed 7 of the 10 Executive Order subjects, as shown in Appendix A, that affect USDA.



The forum provided information on what it is like to have a disability at USDA and was the start of an ongoing dialogue between employees with disabilities and committee members.

Some primary issues that the committee considered were:

- Whether USDA provides employment and career opportunities for people with disabilities to the same extent it provides them to all employees;
- Whether employees with disabilities have accommodations and training at the workplace to maximize their potential; and
- Whether programs, activities, and services are accessible to all employees.

In order to answer these questions, as well as gather data for this report, the Department planned a nationwide listening session and all-employee survey.

Listening Session: The Department hosted a nationwide listening session on July 16, 1998. The forum provided information on what it is like to have a disability at USDA and was the start of an ongoing dialogue between employees with disabilities and committee members. Employees in field locations and employees who did not wish to speak openly had the opportunity to submit written statements by e-mail or fax.


Future forums to discuss issues, concerns, and success stories pertaining to USDA employees with disabilities are also being planned for field locations.

Survey: Managers and employees participating in the listening session reviewed the draft of a nationwide, all-employee survey planned for fall 1998 distribution. The responses to the survey will identify issues for analysis and guide committee members in their development of strategies for quality improvement in providing opportunities for employees with disabilities.

Overall Goals and Objectives

In order to address institutional and underlying problems, the SACED and its subcommittees have developed a set of goals. When implemented, action plans developed from the following goals and their supporting objectives will ensure accountability and follow-through by USDA management:

- Strengthen USDA's ability to serve its customers through a diverse work force that includes people with disabilities and disabled veterans.
- Strengthen USDA's ability to provide accommodations to employees with disabilities through an accommodation process that meets the needs of applicants, employees, and managers.
- Improve and increase USDA's support for employing, training, mentoring, and advancing people with mental retardation and cognitive disabilities so that they may reach their potential.



*Secretary of Agriculture
Dan Glickman's goal is
that each employee and
customer of the U.S.
Department of
Agriculture be treated
fairly and equitably, and
with dignity and respect.*

- Prepare a statistical profile of USDA employees to gain an understanding of how the USDA compares to the rest of the Federal Government in its employment of people with disabilities and to identify where improvements can be made.
- Evaluate the USDA work force to see how people with disabilities compare to the USDA work force at large when considering grade levels, length of service, time in grade, education, and other relevant factors.

Action Plan

Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman's goal is that each employee and customer of the U.S. Department of Agriculture be treated fairly and equitably, and with dignity and respect. The committee collected data and assessed what changes, modifications, and innovations are necessary to remove barriers faced by USDA employees with disabilities.

The resulting actions include designing a simple accommodation process that fully supports the needs of applicants, employees with disabilities, and managers, thereby ensuring the productivity of all employees. User-friendly processes and simplified policies will be developed and implemented through a "Common-Sense Guide to the Accommodation Process," and employees and managers will be trained on how to use the process. Compliance with streamlined accommodation procedures will be incorporated into the equal opportunity/civil rights performance element of all managers to include both employment activities and program delivery. Responsibility and accountability will be established through performance standards and performance measures that will be incorporated into strategic plans and annual performance plans. Yearly program reviews, customer surveys, and self-evaluations will ensure program responsiveness and efficiency.

Statistical analysis will provide a baseline, so that further USDA actions can be planned to improve our capability to provide meaningful employment for people with disabilities. Centralized funding will provide accessible technologies that work with systems currently in use or planned for use by the agencies. Access to technology ensures that employees with disabilities can compete equally for assignments, details, and promotions. Accessibility will be a common requirement in all programs and services in order to ensure equal participation and benefit for all of our applicants, employees, and customers. Accessible events will include providing sign-language interpreting services for people who cannot hear, obtaining materials in alternative formats for people who cannot see standard print, and providing facilities that are physically accessible. Managers and meeting planners will be held accountable for ensuring accessibility to USDA-wide events, ceremonies, training, or special programs.

III. Introduction



The committee's goal is to enable USDA to achieve equitable, consistent, Department-wide policies and systems providing equal access and reasonable accommodations, where employees with disabilities are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and to establish USDA as an employer of choice.



This report presents the plans and accomplishments of the Secretary's Advisory Committee for Employees with Disabilities (SACED), reestablished by Secretary Dan Glickman in June 1998. The committee members consist of Senior Executives from each mission area and Executive Operations, and Staff Directors from Departmental Administration, who serve as program advisors to the committee. The committee structure reflects the highest level of leadership in USDA. SACED officials have the responsibility to recommend changes in policy to the Secretary to ensure management's accountability with committee goals. The committee supports equal participation of employees and customers with disabilities in all USDA-sponsored programs, activities, and services. SACED is working to change the organizational culture so that accessibility is universal and accommodations ensure employee productivity to maximize efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of USDA programs and services nationwide.

The committee's goal is to enable USDA to achieve equitable, consistent, Department-wide policies and systems providing equal access and reasonable accommodations, where employees with disabilities are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and to establish USDA as an employer of choice.

In November 1997, Secretary Glickman authorized the Disability Action Committee (DAC), an ad hoc employee advisory committee, to provide staff support for the Secretary's Advisory Committee. The DAC supports establishing and fostering a climate in USDA where people with disabilities are treated fairly and equitably, and are held to the same standards as all employees.

On March 13, 1998, the President signed an Executive Order establishing a National Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities that will create a coordinated and aggressive national policy. It is hoped that this effort will bring working-age individuals with disabilities into gainful employment at a rate approaching that of the general adult population. (See Appendix A for the White House Press Release and Executive Order.)

The SACED established four subcommittees to review USDA's status on the issues present in the Executive Order. The subcommittees addressed 7 of the 10 Executive Order subjects, as shown in Appendix A, that impact USDA. The subcommittees were united in their identification of barriers and issues that exist in USDA. These issues included:

- 
- 
- Whether USDA provides employment and career opportunities for people with disabilities the same as provided to all employees;
 - Whether employees with disabilities have accommodations and training at the workplace to maximize their potential; and
 - Whether programs, activities, and services are accessible to all employees.

To answer these questions, and gather data for this report, the Department planned a nationwide listening session and all-employee survey.

The listening session forum held on July 16, 1998, provided information on what it is like to have a disability at USDA. This successful forum is the start of an ongoing dialogue between employees with disabilities and the SACED. Employees in field locations and employees who did not wish to speak openly had the opportunity to submit written statements by e-mail or fax.

Future forums to discuss issues, concerns, and success stories pertaining to USDA employees with disabilities are also being planned for field locations.

Managers and employees participating in the listening session reviewed the draft of a nationwide, all-employee survey planned for fall 1998 distribution. The responses to the survey will identify issues for analysis and guide committee members in their development of recommendations for improvement in providing opportunities for employees with disabilities.

This report contains nine sections: the Letter of Transmittal, Executive Summary, Introduction, reports from the four subcommittees, a summary of the subcommittee recommendations, and the appendixes. The subcommittee sections include Subcommittee on Disability Programs and Services, Subcommittee on Statistics, Subcommittee on Centralized Funding, and Subcommittee on Employees with Mental Retardation and Cognitive Disabilities. Each section addresses the goals, objectives, accomplishments, recommendations, benefits, and existing USDA resources. The Subcommittee on Statistics section includes a summary of statistical analysis to date. Supporting statistical materials and detailed tables are located in Appendix B.

This successful forum is the start of an ongoing dialogue between employees with disabilities and the SACED.

IV. Subcommittee on Disability Programs and Services

Goal

To strengthen USDA's ability to serve its customers through a diverse work force that includes people with disabilities and disabled veterans.

This section addresses the analysis of Executive Order 13078, subjects (1), (5), and (7), which state the following:

(1) analyze the existing programs and policies of Task Force member agencies to determine what changes, modifications, and innovations may be necessary to remove barriers to work faced by people with disabilities;

(5) evaluate and, where appropriate, coordinate and collaborate on, research and demonstration priorities of Task Force member agencies related to employment of adults with disabilities; and

(7) subject to the availability of appropriations, analyze youth programs related to employment (e.g., Employment and Training Administration programs, special education, vocational rehabilitation, school-to-work transition, vocational education, and Social Security Administration work incentives and other programs, as may be determined by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Task Force) and the outcomes of those programs for young people with disabilities.

Objectives

The objectives of this goal include the following:

- Examine existing programs and policies to determine what changes, modifications, and innovations may be necessary to enhance opportunities for employees with disabilities.
- Increase representation of people with disabilities at all employment levels.
- Expand opportunities for employee development and career advancement for employees with disabilities.
- Ensure that employees with disabilities have the accommodations and resources to succeed in their careers.
- Enhance USDA's reputation and be recognized as a model employer of choice that embraces diversity, where people with disabilities are recruited, developed, and retained.

Accomplishments

Accomplishments for this goal include the following:




The goal of the Subcommittee on Disability Programs and Services is to strengthen USDA's ability to serve its customers through a diverse work force that includes people with disabilities and disabled veterans.

- USDA has continued to exceed the Federal-wide employment level for people with targeted disabilities for the past 5 years. USDA currently ranks 15th out of 48 Executive agencies.
- USDA established the Accessible Technology Program in 1992. This program supports the headquarters Technology Accessible Resources Gives Employment Today (TARGET) Center, Washington, DC, and the Midwest TARGET Center, St. Louis, MO.
- USDA established an in-house sign language interpreting service for people with hearing impairments.
- USDA was recognized as an "outstanding employer" for its hiring of college students with disabilities through the Work force Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities, sponsored by the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, the Department of Defense, and a consortium of Federal agencies.
- USDA is an active partner with the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities on various initiatives. These efforts include High School/High Tech, Perspectives on Employment of People with Disabilities annual conference, Committee on Disabled Veterans, and the work force recruitment program.
- USDA issued a 504 Self-Evaluation Handbook to assist USDA agencies with surveying all federally conducted programs to ensure compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.
- USDA has expanded external employment opportunities for people with disabilities through the purchase of supplies and services from various non-profit industries that employ workers who are blind or severely disabled. These industries include organizations such as the National Industries for the Blind and the National Industries for the Severely Handicapped, known as the Javits-Wagner O'Day and Randolph Sheppard programs.
- USDA's Agricultural Research Service and Forest Service participated in a 5-year demonstration project that was approved by the Office of Personnel Management and the Office of Management and Budget. The demonstration project allowed segments of the agencies to bypass the Federal Personnel Manual merit promotion procedures to allow for innovative ways to identify and employ applicants. Many disabled veterans and people with disabilities benefitted from this nontraditional employment effort.
- All USDA agencies reported greater use of excepted service appointments to employ persons with physical and cognitive impairments, as well as student educational employment and unpaid volunteer service.
- USDA's Office of Operations has a partnership with the District of Columbia Public School System to establish a supported employment program that provides developmental opportunities for individuals with severe mental retardation and other physical disabilities.
- USDA developed a brochure for employees to use in setting up meetings in order to ensure participation and access for people with disabilities.

Recommendations

A review of USDA programs and activities presents the following recommendations aimed at assisting and encouraging managers at all levels to proactively seek out, recruit, hire, promote, retain, reasonably accommodate, and help develop the careers of people with disabilities:




A review of USDA programs and activities presents the following recommendations aimed at assisting and encouraging managers at all levels to proactively seek out, recruit, hire, promote, retain, reasonably accommodate, and help develop the careers of people with disabilities

- Establish or develop a specialized mentoring program to ensure full integration of people with disabilities and to help employees with disabilities acquire the skills needed to achieve their career goals. Ensure participation of employees with disabilities at all grade levels, and provide sensitivity awareness training for mentors on appropriate language, terminology, and etiquette when interacting with people with disabilities.
- Require all agencies to host various accessible training classes that will educate all employees about career enhancements for employees with disabilities. The training shall include all levels of management and will cover the following subjects:
 - Sensitivity and awareness about accessible technology and disability issues;
 - An overview of our legal obligations under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and various other Federal laws;
 - A reminder for managers that as technology upgrades occur in an agency, accessible technology integration must be provided as well.
- Increase the accountability of Senior Executives and mid-level managers for compliance, with the goal of making USDA the employer of choice among people with disabilities.
- Work with USDA employee disability organizations to include the involvement of persons with disabilities in policy development and activities that affect their community.
- Periodically survey employees with disabilities across the country to gain their perspective on the quality of their employment, accommodations, and participation and access to USDA programs, activities, and services.
- Support agencies to conduct employment compliance and personnel management reviews in order to ensure that employees with disabilities have the same opportunities as all employees.
- Establish centralized funding in USDA to provide accommodations and accessible technologies to employees with disabilities nationwide.
- Provide additional Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) to agencies when they hire disabled persons.

Benefits

Incorporating the above recommendations will strengthen USDA's commitment, program delivery, employment, and advancement of people with disabilities. The success of USDA is dependent on the vigor with which an



The success of USDA is dependent on the vigor with which an agency, its managers, and its employees truly seek to make the agency an employer of choice for all people, including persons with disabilities.

agency, its managers, and its employees truly seek to make the agency an employer of choice for all people, including persons with disabilities.

The benefits of implementing the recommendations include:

- USDA agencies will consistently comply with both the letter and the spirit of the law.
- Money and other resources will be saved by centralizing the funding of accommodations for applicants and employees nationwide. Centralized funding will expedite the acquisition process for applicants and employees with disabilities.
- Ongoing training programs will remind managers at all levels of their obligation to provide people with disabilities opportunities, accommodations, and access to all USDA programs and activities.
- Access to USDA information in alternative formats will be ensured.

Existing USDA Resources

Resources for people with disabilities available within USDA are described below:

USDA Disability Employment Program: The Office of Civil Rights (OCR), Agency Support and Special Emphasis Programs Division (ASSEPD), has a designated full-time Disability Employment Program Manager (DEPM) to implement our legal requirements under Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and EEOC Management Directive 712, to establish an affirmative action program for people with disabilities. Each agency has appointed either a full-time or collateral duty DEPM to carry out these functions in the agency or mission area, as designated. Primary functions of the Disability Employment Program are to promote the recruitment, employment, advancement, and retention of people with disabilities, particularly those with severe (targeted) disabilities, including disabled veterans; to provide technical support and assistance to employees and managers regarding reasonable accommodations; and to conduct sensitivity awareness training and provide employment information on special hiring authorities.

Accessible Technology Program: The Accessible Technology Program was established in 1992 to support the headquarters TARGET Center in Washington, DC, and the Midwest TARGET Center in St. Louis, MO. The Centers assist managers and employees with accessible technologies and accommodations for people with disabilities. The Centers serve as a repository for requests for agricultural information in alternative formats, such as Braille and large print.

USDA Employee Organizations: The Association for Persons with Disabilities in Agriculture (APDA) is a chartered employee organization formed in 1990 to meet the needs of employees with disabilities. This orga-

nization is committed to broadening horizons, breaking down attitudinal barriers, and building relationships based on positive experiences.

In October 1993, the Pathfinders was sanctioned as an employee organization by the Forest Service Chief and Staff in Washington, DC. There are chapters in the Rocky Mountain, Southwest, Pacific Southwest, Northwest, and Southern regions of the Forest Service. The Pathfinder's mission is to promote and ensure equality for people with disabilities.

USDA Secretary's Advisory Committee for Employees with Disabilities:

In June 1997, Secretary Dan Glickman reestablished the Secretary's Advisory Committee for Employees with Disabilities (SACED), which is comprised of Senior Executive or sub-Cabinet level members. The committee's goal is to enable USDA to achieve equitable, consistent, Department-wide policies and systems providing equal access and reasonable accommodations where employees with disabilities are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and to establish USDA as an employer of choice.

USDA Disability Action Committee: In November 1997, Secretary Glickman authorized the Disability Action Committee (DAC), an ad hoc employee advisory committee, to provide staff support for the Secretary's Advisory Committee. The DAC supports establishing and fostering a climate in USDA where people with disabilities are treated fairly and equitably, and are held to the same standards as all employees.

V. Subcommittee on Statistics

Goals

A primary goal is to prepare a statistical profile of USDA employees in order to gain an understanding of how the USDA compares to the rest of the Federal Government in its employment of people with disabilities and to identify where improvements can be made. Another primary goal is to thoroughly evaluate the USDA work force to see how people with disabilities compare to the USDA work force at large when considering grade levels, length of service, time in grade, education, and other relevant factors.

This section addresses the analysis of Executive Order 13078, subject (4), which states:

(4) consider statistical and data analysis, cost data, research, and policy studies on public subsidies, employment, employment discrimination, and rates of return-to-work for individuals with disabilities.

Some primary issues were whether the USDA provided the same employment and career opportunities for people with disabilities as it provided to all employees, and whether disabled employees had proper accommodations and training at the workplace to maximize their potential.

Some primary issues were whether the USDA provided the same employment and career opportunities for people with disabilities as it provided to all employees, and whether disabled employees had proper accommodations and training at the workplace to maximize their potential. The following sections summarize an attempt to evaluate the first primary issue by undertaking a statistical profile of USDA employees. An all-employee survey will address other issues. The survey will help USDA learn more about people's general level of understanding about issues that concern people with disabilities, and to seek input about their concerns.

Objective

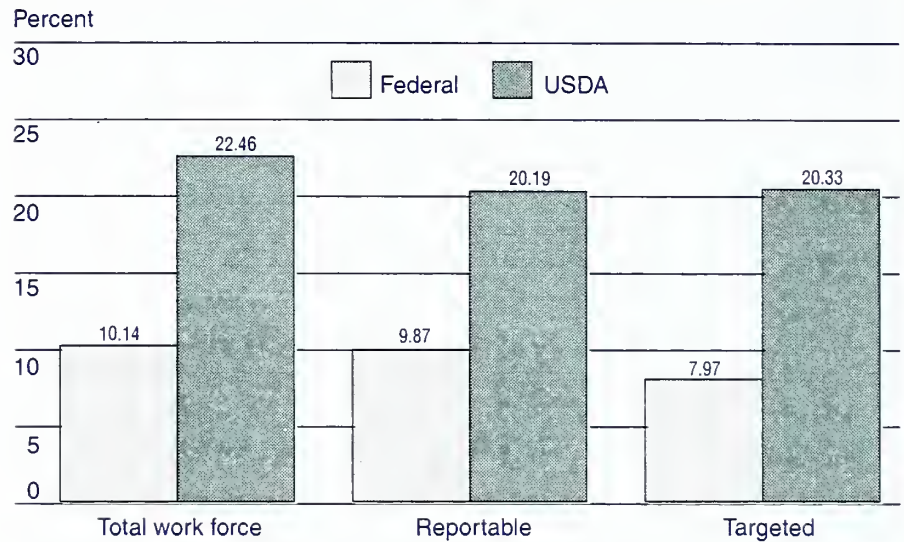
The objective of this analysis is to provide a baseline upon which to base further USDA actions, with the aim of improving the Department's capability to provide meaningful employment for people with disabilities.

Summary of Statistical Analysis

This report contains statistical analysis of the current, on-board employment of people with disabilities at USDA. The following two primary data sources were used for the analysis.

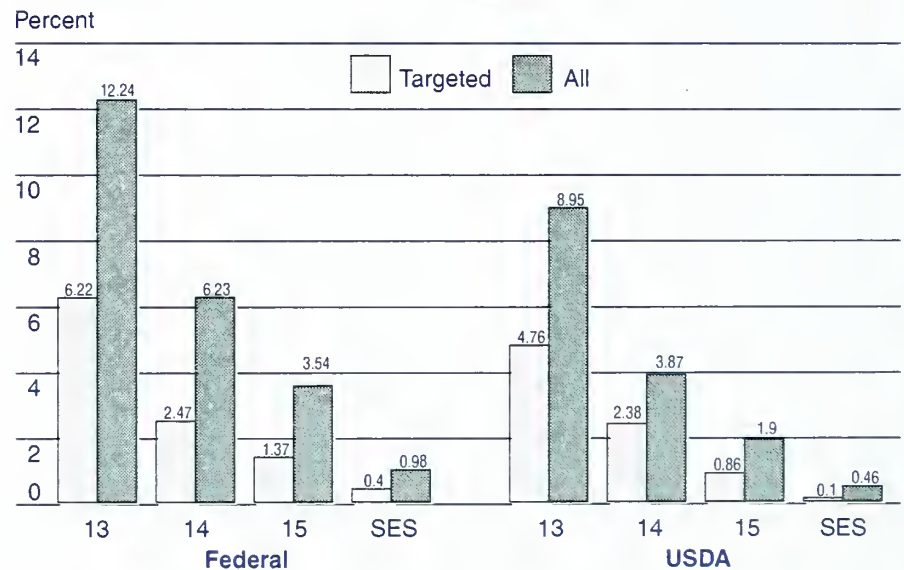
- a. Annual Report on the Employment of Minorities, Women, and People with Disabilities in the Federal Government for the Fiscal Year Ending 1997 as prepared by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.
- b. Analysis of employee characteristics in USDA based on the employee data base used by the National Finance Center.

Percent of Federal and USDA Employees Receiving Promotions By Disability Status, FY 1997



Source: Annual Report for FY 1997 on Employment of Minorities, Women, and People with Disabilities in The Federal Government

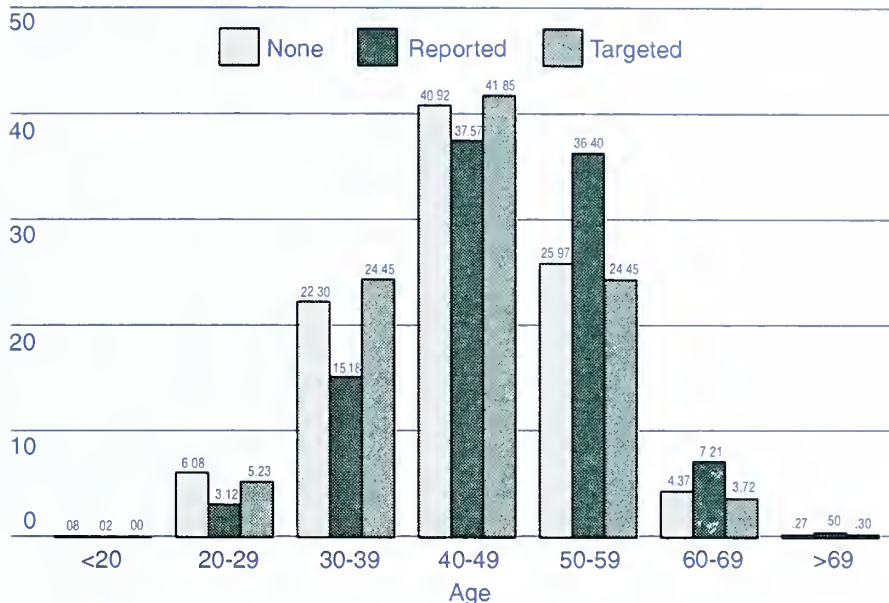
Percent of Federal and USDA Employees at Grade Levels GS-13 through SES for All Employees and Those with Disabilities FY 1997



Source: Annual Report for FY 1997 on Employment of Minorities, Women, and People with Disabilities in The Federal Government

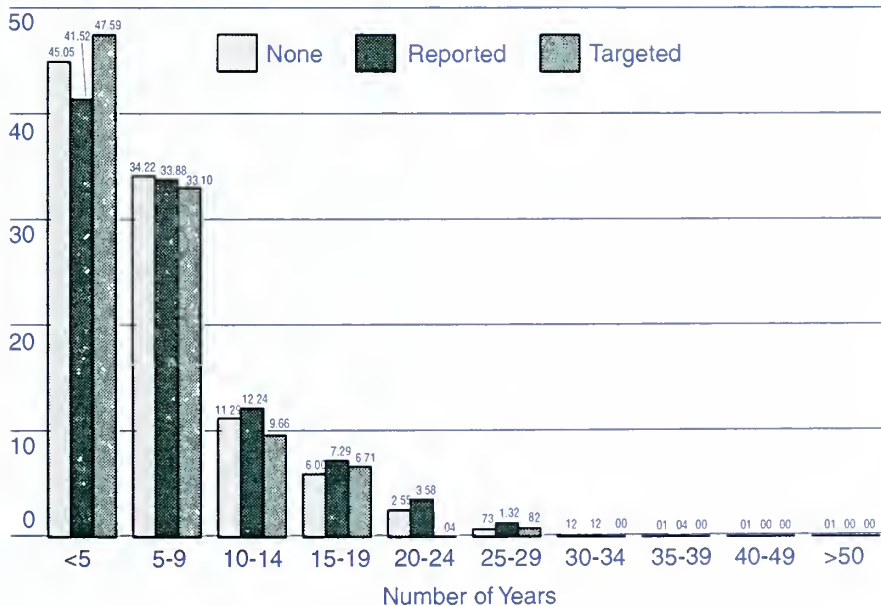
Age Distribution of USDA Employees By Disability Status, FY 1998

Percent of total



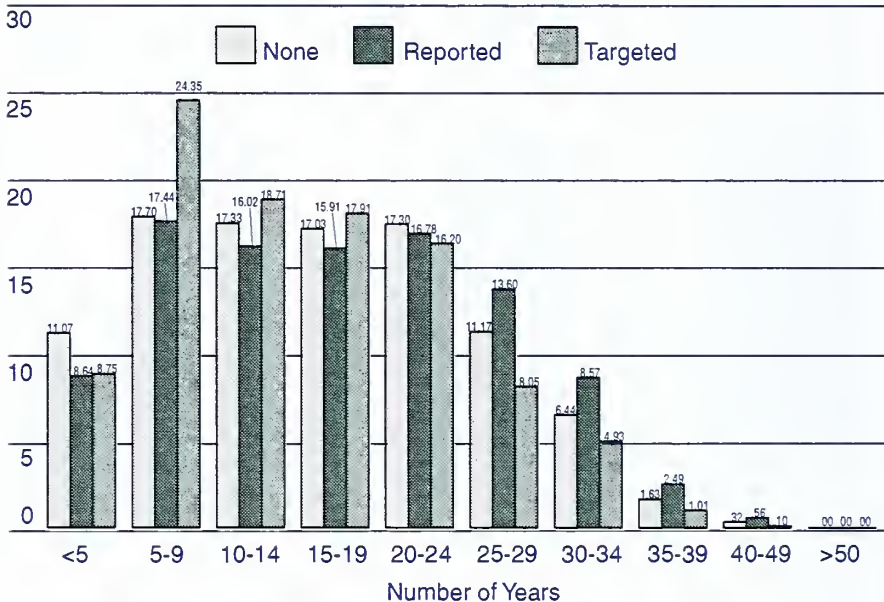
Time in Grade Distribution of USDA Employees By Disability Status, FY 1998

Percent of total



Length of Service Distribution of USDA Employees By Disability Status, FY 1998

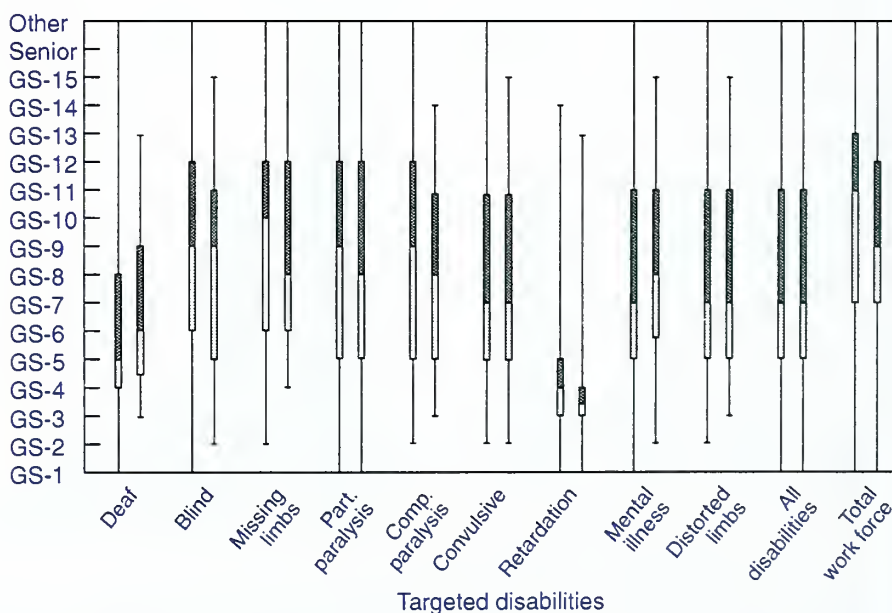
Percent of total



Comparison of Grade Level of Employees with Targeted Disabilities Between the Federal Government and USDA

Note: Federal Government Data Plotted First Followed by USDA

Grade




Lines point to minimum and maximum grades. Boxes show range of 25% of employees below the mean grade and 25% above the mean grade.

Source: FY97 Annual Report and NFC Summary

The following presents some general results from the statistical review: It should be noted that the disabled population is a small percentage of the total USDA population; in FY 1997, there were slightly fewer than 1,100 people with targeted disabilities out of about 83,000 total employees. Therefore, small increases or decreases in the number of people in some categories can make a considerable difference in some percentages.

- The relative percentage of people with disabilities has declined during the last 3 years. More information is needed about how the downsizing effort affected the employment of disabled people. Were their jobs more likely to be downsized, were disabled people more likely to take the early retirement opportunities, or were there other explanatory factors?
- USDA employees received more promotions than did the general Federal work force in FY 1997. Promotion rates for people with reportable and targeted disabilities were similar to the rate for the total USDA work force.
- The percentage of the Federal and USDA work force of employees in grade levels 14 through SES exceeded the percentage of employees with targeted disabilities in those grades. The percentage of USDA employees in those grade levels is only slightly more than half of the percentage in the Federal Government at large. The USDA would have to nearly double the number of people in those grade levels to meet the Federal Government level. However, the USDA percentages of disabled employees in those grade levels were considerably lower than the percentages in the population at large, and were similar to the rest of the Federal Government.
- The difference between grade levels of all USDA employees and those with disabilities is not explained by type of disability, or by the age, time in grade, and length of service distributions. For all categories, people with disabilities generally follow the characteristics of the population at large.
- Levels of educational attainment, such as a high school diploma, bachelor's or master's degrees, were higher for the USDA work force at large, exceeding education levels for people with disabilities. People with disabilities are more likely to be in the clerical job series than in the professional and technical job series. This is consistent with the comparative education levels, but there may be other factors to consider.
- Employment of people with disabilities varies widely between agencies. Because of small numbers in some cases, the percentages could change with the addition or loss of small numbers of people. More information about educational requirements by agency is required in order to fully understand the employment data by agency.
- The reason for the grade level differential is primarily related to job series and educational levels of people with disabilities.



The relative percentage of people with disabilities has declined during the last 3 years. More information is needed about how the downsizing effort affected the employment of disabled people.

Recommended Actions

The following recommended actions will assist USDA in meeting the goals for successful employment and opportunities for employees with disabilities:


- Review USDA's recruiting efforts to see if people with disabilities have an adequate opportunity for employment.
- Identify and remove barriers prohibiting people with targeted disabilities from moving into higher grades, especially professional, administrative, and technical positions.
- Ensure that people with disabilities are included in career development programs.
- Survey employees with disabilities to obtain field perspectives on their employment and the level of customer satisfaction with USDA programs and services.
- Evaluate current employment practices and establish a measurable numerical objective to increase the employment of people with disabilities.
- Survey the work force to collect accurate disability data every 3 years to ensure accuracy and integrity of our data.
- Convene a workgroup to review and evaluate the cost associated with disability-related employment complaints, look at underlying reasons for such complaints, and take appropriate action.
- Convene a workgroup to review worker's compensation costs for employees who are not working due to a disability, devise strategies on a case-by-case basis to return employees back to work who are able, and provide the full scope of accommodations to ensure successful continued employment. For example, an employee who is unable to type due to repetitive motion injury of the wrists could use a voice-input computer system to type.
- Issue a memorandum to all employees, encouraging them to review and update their personnel data profiles to capture changes in educational levels and other areas that are tracked and reported under affirmative employment programs.
- Ensure that adequate resources are allocated to all disability programs.

Benefits

Benefits of this approach include creating a baseline to show where we are now, so that further USDA actions can be planned and implemented with the aim of improving the Department's capability to provide meaningful employment and advancement opportunities for people with disabilities.

Existing USDA Resources

The National Finance Center and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission were used as primary data sources. Additional data was provided by the Office of Civil Rights and the Office of Human Resources. Analysis of the data was provided by the National Agricultural Statistics Service.



Benefits of this approach include creating a baseline to show where we are now, so that further USDA actions can be planned and implemented with the aim of improving the Department's capability to provide meaningful employment and advancement opportunities for people with disabilities.

VI. Subcommittee on Centralized Funding

Goal

The goal of the Subcommittee on Centralized Funding is to strengthen USDA's ability to provide accommodations to employees with disabilities. This goal includes supporting USDA employees with disabilities through an efficient and user-friendly accommodation process that meets the needs of all employees and managers.


This section addresses the analysis of Executive Order 13078, subject (8), which states the following:

- (8) evaluate whether a single governmental entity or program should be established to provide computer and electronic accommodations for Federal employees with disabilities.

Objectives

The objectives for this goal include the following:

- Develop centralized funding to provide accommodations and services for employees with disabilities and expedite the accommodations process.
- Support availability of accommodations and eliminate disparities in agencies' budgets for providing reasonable accommodations and accessible technologies.
- Streamline the procurement process for the acquisition of accommodations and accessible technologies to reduce costs and cycle time.
- Eliminate barriers to receiving accommodations and accessible technologies for managers and employees with disabilities.
- Foster a positive working relationship between the employee and the manager and support the role of technology in meeting agency and employee goals.
- Support employees' upward mobility and career goals through technically current hardware, software, and services, allowing them to compete equally with others.
- Save resources by assisting managers and employees in the timely implementation of accommodations that meet the needs of employees. Save money and resources by supporting one Departmental contract to support accommodation and accessible technology purchases.
- Provide technical assistance to managers so they can more effectively hire, accommodate, and promote people with disabilities.
- Support the employee's need for privacy about the accommodation and the disability.
- Aid USDA in complying with both the letter and the spirit of the law.
- Ensure access to USDA information in alternative formats.
- Employ a streamlined process characterized by efficiency and sensitivity towards people with disabilities that complies with regulatory requirements.



The goal of the Subcommittee on Centralized Funding is to strengthen USDA's ability to provide accommodations to employees with disabilities. This goal includes supporting USDA employees with disabilities through an efficient and user-friendly accommodation process that meets the needs of all employees and managers.

Accomplishments

USDA established the Accessible Technology Program and the Technology Accessible Resources Gives Employment Today (TARGET) Center in 1992 and the Midwest TARGET Center in 1996. The centers are accommodations resource and evaluation facilities that assist managers and employees with disabilities nationwide.

USDA conducted a review to identify agencies that have specially allocated funds for accommodations for their employees with disabilities. Currently, the Food Safety and Inspection Service agency, and the Rural Development mission area, have centralized funding for accommodations for employees with disabilities.

Recommended Actions

The subcommittee recommends that the TARGET Centers maintain the Department's centralized fund for accommodations. The USDA TARGET Centers have provided accommodations and assistance to the Department for over 7 years. The centers provide accommodation resources, conduct needs assessments and evaluations, and provide training and awareness regarding the need to accommodate people with disabilities to USDA employees and managers, as well as supporting other Federal agencies.


This recommendation consists of three phases, as follows:

- Phase one recommends that the Secretary of Agriculture direct agencies to establish centralized funding to accommodate their employees. This phase shall be implemented in FY 1999.
- The second phase includes developing a Departmental centralized fund for accommodations. This fund, maintained by the Department as an appropriation line item, shall provide accommodations to managers and employees nationwide.
- The final phase is implementation of the Department's centralized fund, which shall occur in FY 2001.

Benefits of Centralized Funding

The benefits of centralized funding were derived from a review of other Federal Government accommodation programs that were noted during a search for process models and examples of best practices throughout the Federal sector. The Department of Defense (DoD)

Computer/Telecommunications Accommodation Program (CAP) was found to be particularly effective. The DoD established the CAP to provide accommodations to employees with disabilities worldwide through a centralized



The subcommittee recommends that the TARGET Centers maintain the Department's centralized fund for accommodations.



USDA will develop a process model using the best practices of other Federal programs and tailor the model to meet USDA needs.

fund. This program is deemed a success in the Federal sector in accommodating employees with disabilities. USDA will develop a process model using the best practices of other Federal programs and tailor the model to meet USDA needs. Centralized funding would benefit USDA in the following ways:

- Eliminates funding and other impediments to managers who want to hire people with disabilities.
- Helps USDA organizations comply with both the letter and the spirit of the law.
- Ensures efficiency in supporting the Department on accessible technologies.
- Saves money on equipment by buying in bulk, which helps to obtain a better price that is negotiable, and saves on procurement support. Saves money for the organization by having a team of experts who deal with technology on a daily basis and who understand integration issues. The technical accommodation experts can make the right match of accommodation to the employee's hardware, software, and network needs.
- Provides a central point of contact for the vendor community, which ensures that the Department is aware of emerging technologies.
- Helps the Department train and assist employees with carpal tunnel syndrome and other repetitive stress injuries through awareness of cost-free or low-cost ergonomic solutions.
- Ensures access to USDA information in alternative formats.

Existing USDA Resources

Agencies with Centralized Funding: There are many resources available in USDA to support employees with disabilities nationwide. The Food Safety and Inspection Service agency and the Rural Development mission area have implemented policies on centralized funding and currently maintain centralized funding for employees with disabilities.

Other resources available in the Department include the USDA TARGET Centers, the Disability Employment Program, and the Sign-Language Interpreting Service. See Appendix E for the mission statement of the TARGET Center, Appendix F for the Disability Employment Program, and Appendix G for the Sign-Language Interpreting Service.


VII. Subcommittee on Employees with Mental Retardation and Cognitive Disabilities

Goal

The goal of this subcommittee is to improve and increase USDA's support for employing, training, mentoring, and advancing people with mental retardation and cognitive disabilities.

This section addresses the analysis of Executive Order (EO) 13078, subject (9), which states the following:

(9) Consult with the President's Committee on Mental Retardation on policies to increase the employment of people with mental retardation and cognitive disabilities.




The goal of this subcommittee is to improve and increase USDA's support for employing, training, mentoring, and advancing people with mental retardation and cognitive disabilities.

The Executive Order mission focuses on the employment of adults with disabilities to address the unreasonably high (near 66 percent) unemployment rate for that community. "Employment" itself as a goal is not restricted in the Executive Order to Federal employment and includes the use of contract employment. It is intended to be "employment to increase the economic and social opportunities of persons with disabilities."

Objectives

Following are objectives for this goal:

- Increase contract and permanent employment of people with mental retardation and cognitive disabilities for USDA and increase procurement of goods and services produced by this population by increased use of the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) and similar programs.
 - Provide agencies with a source of qualified persons with disabilities without the need for competition.
 - Provide a list of applicants nationwide.
 - Promote the programs to other Federal agencies.
 - Promote the expansion of the availability of the Federal Supply Schedules (FSS) to State and local government partners.
 - Expand service opportunities across the country as USDA's services are reconfigured.
 - Encourage job growth in the State, local government, and commercial markets.
 - Recognize USDA managers who create opportunities for this population.
- Organize and use a network of sources for the recruitment of persons with disabilities.
 - Provide managers with trained candidates for employment.



Many people with mental retardation and cognitive disabilities have the ability to be highly productive workers when provided with appropriate assistance. These individuals are quite capable and hardworking, when given the needed support, coaching, and opportunity to excel.

- Provide qualified candidates with vocational training in preparation for opportunities.
- Provide candidates with vocational skills evaluation to identify training and accommodation needs for specific jobs or job types.
- Eliminate barriers to training and mentoring and employ a process characterized by common sense and sensitivity to persons with disabilities.
- Foster positive working relationships between the employee, manager, and co-workers of employees with disabilities.
- Improve services offered to USDA employees with disabilities using skills in vocational rehabilitation and training.
- Improve the skills and promotion potential of USDA employees with mental or cognitive disabilities.

Accomplishments

USDA has expanded external employment opportunities for people with disabilities through the purchase of supplies and services from various nonprofit industries that employ workers who are blind or severely disabled. These industries include organizations such as the National Industries for the Blind and the National Industries for the Severely Handicapped, known as JWOD.


The Department received an award from JWOD in 1998 highlighting opportunities that USDA provided to people with severe disabilities through contracts with the Department.

Recommended Actions

Many people with mental retardation and cognitive disabilities have the ability to be highly productive workers when provided with appropriate assistance. These individuals are quite capable and hardworking, when given the needed support, coaching, and opportunity to excel. Local nonprofit agencies that employ these populations can be sources of competitively priced goods and services, staffing for custodial and clerical jobs at USDA sites, temporary employees, and candidates for permanent employment by USDA. They can also educate managers and provide advice and coaching to employees on a contract basis.


The following recommendations are aimed at assisting people with mental retardation and cognitive disabilities:

- Increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities by increasing the level of contracting under the JWOD and similar programs.
- Assure that the requirements of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) are included in Federal contracts in excess of \$10,000.



Develop a statement for issuance by the Secretary, calling on USDA and vendors to take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities, without discrimination based on their physical or mental attributes.

- Increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities by increasing participation in the goals of Executive Order 13078 by vendors doing business with USDA.
- Develop a statement for issuance by the Secretary, calling on USDA and vendors to take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities, without discrimination based on their physical or mental attributes.
- Remind all USDA contracting officers of the importance of affirmative action in employment of people with disabilities, including those with mental retardation and cognitive disabilities, and publicize our commitment to the vendor community.
- Strengthen the role of the Disability Employment Program Managers to ensure employees receive an appropriate level of support and by providing vocational rehabilitation training to the DEPMs.
 - Provide better responses to the needs of USDA employees with disabilities and ensure employee issues receive an appropriate level of support.
 - Refer employees to a full range of services offered by USDA and outside providers by contracting with local rehabilitation agencies and state departments of rehabilitative services for specialized training, job coaching, and vocational rehabilitation services.
 - Demonstrate USDA's commitment to improving the work environment and supporting a positive network for its employees with disabilities.
 - Provide improved assistance to managers in creating appropriate work environments to enable employees with disabilities to succeed.
 - Conduct needed follow-up on quality of services provided.
- Improve services offered to employees with disabilities through vocational rehabilitation and training, as needed.
- Provide employers with initial training on how to work with a person with mental retardation or cognitive impairments and provide continuing support to the employer and employee on an "as needed" basis.
- Improve the skills and promotion potential of current and new employees with disabilities by requiring managers to develop and implement individual training plans with employees.
 - Allow employees to receive an appropriate level of training, which enables them to perform their duties more effectively.
 - Allow employees to receive training that will enable them to take advantage of opportunities for promotion, cross-training, or new assignments.
 - Provide training for managers and train co-workers so that they will improve the productivity of the unit.
 - Provide information on training costs, to be incorporated into budget forecasts.



Increases employment opportunities for persons with disabilities by increasing participation in the goals of Executive Order 13078 by vendors that employ people with disabilities doing business with USDA.

- Expand the mission of the Accessible Technology Program to assist people with mental retardation or cognitive impairments.

Benefits

The benefits to be derived from implementing the recommended actions include the following:

- Encourages management and employees with disabilities to work as a team.
- Increases employment opportunities for persons with disabilities by increasing participation in the goals of Executive Order 13078 by vendors that employ people with disabilities doing business with USDA.
- Provides uniform, non-property related interventions, such as job coaching, to USDA employees with disabilities, through a network of local sources.
- Ensures that services are always provided at a level of excellence by professionally trained personnel.

Existing USDA Resources

JWOD Program: The Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program provides vocational training and employment opportunities to individuals with severe disabilities. It accomplishes this through a system that sets aside Federal contracts for the provision of products, services, and contract employees by non-profit agencies employing people who are mentally retarded, blind or who have other severe disabilities.

USDA Disability Employment Program: The Office of Civil Rights (OCR), Agency Support and Special Emphasis Programs Division (ASSEPD), has a designated full-time Disability Employment Program Manager to implement legal requirements under Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended and the EEOC Management Directive 712 to establish an affirmative employment program for people with disabilities. Each agency has appointed either a full-time or collateral duty DEPM to carry out these functions within the agency or mission area, as designated. Primary functions of the Disability Employment Program are as follows:

- Promote the recruitment, employment, advancement, and retention of people with disabilities, particularly those with severe (targeted) disabilities, including disabled veterans;
- Provide technical support and assistance to employees and managers regarding reasonable accommodations, conduct sensitivity awareness training, and provide employment information on special hiring authorities.

Accessible Technology Program: The Accessible Technology Program was established in 1992 to support the headquarters TARGET Center in Washington, DC, and Midwest TARGET Center in St. Louis, MO. The centers assist managers and employees with accessible technologies and accommodations for people with disabilities. The centers serve as a repository for requests for agricultural information in alternative formats, such as Braille and large print.

VIII. Summary of Subcommittee Recommendations

Recommendations from the Subcommittee on Disability Programs and Services, Subcommittee on Statistics, Subcommittee on Centralized Funding, and Subcommittee on Employees with Mental Retardation and Cognitive Disabilities are summarized below.

Subcommittee on Disability Programs and Services

- Seek out, recruit, hire, promote, retain, reasonably accommodate, and help to develop the careers of people with disabilities.
- Establish or develop a specialized mentoring program to ensure full integration of people with disabilities and to help employees with disabilities acquire the skills needed to achieve their career goals. Ensure participation of employees with disabilities at all grade levels, and provide sensitivity awareness training for mentors on appropriate language, terminology, and etiquette when interacting with people with disabilities.
- Require all agencies to host various accessible training classes that will educate all employees about career enhancements for employees with disabilities.
- Increase the accountability of Senior Executives and mid-level managers for compliance, with the goal of making USDA the employer of choice among people with disabilities.
- Work with USDA employee disability organizations to include the involvement of persons with disabilities in policy development and activities that affect their community.
- Periodically survey employees with disabilities across the country to gain their perspective on the quality of their employment, accommodations, and participation and access to USDA programs, activities, and services.
- Support agencies to conduct employment compliance and personnel management reviews in order to ensure that employees with disabilities have the same opportunities as all employees.
- Establish centralized funding in USDA to provide accommodations and accessible technologies to employees with disabilities nationwide.
- Provide additional Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) to agencies when they hire disabled persons.

Subcommittee on Statistics

- Review USDA's recruiting efforts to see if people with disabilities have an adequate opportunity for employment.
- Identify and remove barriers prohibiting people with targeted disabilities from moving into higher grades, especially professional, administrative, and technical positions.
- Ensure that people with disabilities are included in career development programs.
- Survey employees with disabilities to obtain field perspectives on their employment and the level of customer satisfaction with USDA programs and services.
- Evaluate current employment practices and establish a measurable numerical objective to increase the employment of people with disabilities.
- Survey the work force to collect accurate disability data every 3 years to ensure accuracy and integrity of our data.
- Convene a workgroup to review and evaluate the cost associated with employment complaints, look at underlying reasons for such complaints, and take appropriate action.
- Convene a workgroup to review worker's compensation costs for employees who are not working due to a disability, devise strategies on a case-by-case basis to return employees back to work who are able, and provide the full scope of accommodations to ensure successful continued employment. For example, an employee who is unable to type due to repetitive motion injury of the wrists could use a voice-input computer system to type.
- Issue a memorandum to all employees, encouraging them to review and update their personnel data profiles to capture changes in educational levels and other areas that are tracked and reported under affirmative employment programs.
- Ensure that adequate resources are allocated to all disability programs.

Subcommittee on Centralized Funding

The subcommittee recommends that the TARGET Centers maintain the Department's centralized fund for accommodations. The USDA TARGET Centers have provided accommodations and assistance to the Department for over 7 years. The centers provide accommodation and assistance to resources, conduct needs assessments and evaluations, and provide training and awareness regarding the need to accommodate people with disabilities to USDA employees and managers, as well as supporting other Federal agencies.

This recommendation consists of three phases, as follows:

- Phase one recommends that the Secretary of Agriculture direct agencies to establish centralized funding to accommodate their employees. This phase shall be implemented in FY 1999.
- The second phase includes developing a Departmental centralized fund for accommodations. This fund, maintained by the Department as an appropriation line item, shall provide accommodations to managers and employees nationwide.
- The final phase is implementation of the Department's centralized fund, which shall occur in FY 2001.

Subcommittee on Employees with Mental Retardation and Cognitive Disabilities

- Increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities by increasing the level of contracting under the JWOD and similar programs.
 - Assure that the requirements of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) are included in Federal contracts in excess of \$10,000.
 - Increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities by increasing participation in the goals of Executive Order 13078 by vendors doing business with USDA.
- Develop a statement for issuance by the Secretary, calling on USDA and vendors to take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities, without discrimination based on their physical or mental attributes.
- Remind all USDA contracting officers of the importance of affirmative action in employment of people with disabilities, including those with mental retardation and cognitive disabilities, and publicize our commitment to the vendor community.
- Strengthen the role of the Disability Employment Program Managers to

ensure employees receive an appropriate level of support and by providing vocational rehabilitation training to the DEPMs.

- Provide better responses to the needs of USDA employees with disabilities and ensure employee issues receive an appropriate level of support.
 - Refer employees to a full range of services offered by USDA and outside providers by contracting with local rehabilitation agencies and state departments of rehabilitative services for specialized training, job coaching, and vocational rehabilitation services.
 - Demonstrate USDA's commitment to improving the work environment and supporting a positive network for its employees with disabilities.
 - Provide improved assistance to managers in creating appropriate work environments to enable employees with disabilities to succeed.
 - Conduct needed follow-up on quality of services provided.
- Improve services offered to employees with disabilities through vocational rehabilitation and training, as needed.
 - Provide employers with initial training on how to work with a person with mental retardation or cognitive impairments and provide continuing support to the employer and employee on an "as needed" basis.
 - Improve the skills and promotion potential of current and new employees with disabilities by requiring managers to develop and implement individual training plans with employees.
- Allow employees to receive an appropriate level of training, which enables them to perform their duties more effectively.
 - Allow employees to receive training that will enable them to take advantage of opportunities for promotion, cross-training, or new assignments.
 - Provide training for managers and train co-workers so that they will improve the productivity of the unit.
 - Provide information on training costs, to be incorporated into budget forecasts.
- Expand the mission of the Accessible Technology Program to assist people with mental retardation or cognitive impairments.

IX. Appendixes

- A** White House Press Release and Text of Executive Order 13078
- B** USDA Statistical Data on Employees with Disabilities
- C** Secretary's Advisory Committee for Employees with Disabilities Member List and Departmental Program Advisors
- D** Acknowledgments
- E** Technology Accessible Resources Gives Employment Today (TARGET) Center Mission Statement
- F** Disability Employment Program
- G** Sign-Language Interpreting Service

Appendix A

White House Press Release and Text of Executive Order 13078

President Clinton Signs Executive Order Establishing National Task Force on Employment of People with Disabilities

The White House
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 13, 1998

The President today signed an Executive Order establishing a National Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities that will create a coordinated and aggressive national policy to bring working-age individuals with disabilities into gainful employment at a rate approaching that of the general adult population.

"Since 1993, we have created 15 million new jobs. But the unemployment rate among people with disabilities is far too high, and that is why I'm so pleased to sign today an executive order that will design a strategy to make equality of opportunity, full participation, inclusion, and economic self-sufficiency realities for all 30 million working-age Americans with disabilities," declared President Clinton.

Charged with developing and recommending to the President a Federal policy to reduce employment barriers for persons with disabilities, the Task Force will submit four reports, the first by November 15, 1998, and the last on July 26, 2002, the 10th anniversary of the initial implementation of the employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Alexis M. Herman, Secretary of Labor, will Chair the Task Force. Tony Coelho, Chairman of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, will serve as Vice-Chair.

Key components of the Task Force's directive include analyzing existing programs and policies to determine what changes, modifications and innovations may be necessary to remove barriers to work; developing and recommending options to address the barrier of health insurance coverage; analyzing youth programs related to employment and the outcomes of those programs for young people with disabilities; and evaluating whether Federal studies related to employment and training can and should include a statistically significant sample of adults with disabilities.

The Task Force also will include the Secretary of Education; the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs; the Secretary of Health and Human Services; the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration; the Secretary of the Treasury; the Secretary of Commerce; the Secretary of Transportation; the Administrator of the Small Business Administration; the Chair of the Equal

Employment Opportunity Commission; the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, and the Chair of the National Council on Disability. These officials are required to make the activities and initiatives of this Executive Order a high priority within their respective agencies.

**Text of the Executive Order Increasing Employment of
Adults with Disabilities**

**The White House
Office of the Press Secretary**

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to increase the employment of adults with disabilities to a rate that is as close as possible to the employment rate of the general adult population and to support the goals articulated in the findings and purpose section of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment of National Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities

(a) There is established the "National Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities" ("Task Force"). The Task Force shall comprise the Secretary of Labor, Secretary of Education, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Secretary of Health and Human Services, Commissioner of Social Security, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Commerce, Secretary of Transportation, Director of the Office of Personnel Management, Administrator of the Small Business Administration, the Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Chairperson of the National Council on Disability, the Chair of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, and such other senior executive branch officials as may be determined by the Chair of the Task Force.

(b) The Secretary of Labor shall be the Chair of the Task Force; the Chair of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities shall be the Vice Chair of the Task Force.

(c) The purpose of the Task Force is to create a coordinated and aggressive national policy to bring adults with disabilities into gainful employment at a rate that is as close as possible to that of the general adult population. The Task Force shall develop and recommend to the President, through the Chair of the Task Force, a coordinated Federal policy to reduce employment barriers for persons with disabilities. Policy recommendations may cover such areas as discrimination, reasonable accommodations, inadequate access to health care, lack of consumer-driven, long-term supports and services, transportation, accessible and integrated housing, telecommunications, assistive technology, community services, child care, education, vocational rehabilitation, training services, job retention, on-the-job supports, and economic incentives to work. Specifically, the Task Force shall:

- (1) analyze the existing programs and policies of Task Force member agencies to determine what changes, modifications, and innovations may be necessary to remove barriers to work faced by people with disabilities;
- (2) develop and recommend options to address health insurance coverage as a barrier to employment for people with disabilities;
- (3) subject to the availability of appropriations, analyze State and private disability systems (e.g., workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, private insurance, and State mental health and mental retardation systems) and their effect on Federal programs and employment of adults with disabilities;
- (4) consider statistical and data analysis, cost data, research, and policy studies on public subsidies, employment, employment discrimination, and rates of return-to-work for individuals with disabilities;
- (5) evaluate and, where appropriate, coordinate and collaborate on, research and demonstration priorities of Task Force member agencies related to employment of adults with disabilities;
- (6) evaluate whether Federal studies related to employment and training can, and should, include a statistically significant sample of adults with disabilities;
- (7) subject to the availability of appropriations, analyze youth programs related to employment (e.g., Employment and Training Administration programs, special education, vocational rehabilitation, school-to-work transition, vocational education, and Social Security Administration work incentives and other programs, as may be determined by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Task Force) and the outcomes of those programs for young people with disabilities;
- (8) evaluate whether a single governmental entity or program should be established to provide computer and electronic accommodations for Federal employees with disabilities;
- (9) consult with the President's Committee on Mental Retardation on policies to increase the employment of people with mental retardation and cognitive disabilities; and
- (10) recommend to the President any additional steps that can be taken to advance the employment of adults with disabilities, including legislative proposals, regulatory changes, and program and budget initiatives.

(d) (1) The members of the Task Force shall make the activities and initiatives set forth in this order a high priority within their respective agencies within the levels provided in the President's budget.

(2) The Task Force shall issue its first report to the President by November 15, 1998. The Task Force shall issue a report to the President on November 15, 1999, November 15, 2000, and a final report on July 26, 2002, the 10th anniversary of the initial implementation of the employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The reports shall describe the actions taken by, and progress of, each member of the Task Force in carrying out this order. The Task Force shall terminate 30 days after submitting its final report.

(e) As used herein, an adult with a disability is a person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits at least one major life activity.

Section 2. Specific Activities by Task Force Members and Other Agencies

(a) To ensure that the Federal Government is a model employer of adults with disabilities, by November 15, 1998, the Office of Personnel Management, the Department of Labor, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission shall submit to the Task Force a review of Federal Government personnel laws, regulations, and policies and, as appropriate, shall recommend or implement changes necessary to improve Federal employment policy for adults with disabilities. This review shall include personnel practices and actions such as: hiring, promotion, benefits, retirement, workers' compensation, retention, accessible facilities, job accommodations, layoffs, and reductions in force.

(b) The Departments of Justice, Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services shall report to the Task Force by November 15, 1998, on their work with the States and others to ensure that the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act is carried out in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, so that individuals with disabilities and their families can realize the full promise of welfare reform by having an equal opportunity for employment.

(c) The Departments of Education, Labor, Commerce, and Health and Human Services, the Small Business Administration, and the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities shall work together and report to the Task Force by November 15, 1998, on their work to develop small business and entrepreneurial opportunities for adults with disabilities and strategies for assisting low-income adults, including those with disabilities to create small businesses and micro-enterprises. These same agencies, in consultation with the Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, shall assess the impact of the Randolph-Sheppard Act

vending program and the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act on employment and small business opportunities for people with disabilities.

(d) The Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development shall report to the Task Force by November 15, 1998, on their examination of their programs to see if they can be used to create new work incentives and to remove barriers to work for adults with disabilities.

(e) The Departments of Justice, Education, and Labor, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Social Security Administration shall work together and report to the Task Force by November 15, 1998, on their work to propose remedies to the prevention of people with disabilities from successfully exercising their employment rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 because of the receipt of monetary benefits based on their disability and lack of gainful employment.

(f) The Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor and the Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce, in cooperation with the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, the National Council on Disability, and the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities shall design and implement a statistically reliable and accurate method to measure the employment rate of adults with disabilities as soon as possible, but no later than the date of termination of the Task Force. Data derived from this methodology shall be published on as frequent a basis as possible.

(g) All executive agencies that are not members of the Task Force shall: (1) coordinate and cooperate with the Task Force; and (2) review their programs and policies to ensure that they are being conducted and delivered in a manner that facilitates and promotes the employment of adults with disabilities. Each agency shall file a report with the Task Force on the results of its review on November 15, 1998.

Section 3. Cooperation

All efforts taken by executive departments and agencies under sections 1 and 2 of this order shall, as appropriate, further partnerships and cooperation with public and private sector employers, organizations that represent people with disabilities, organized labor, veteran service organizations, and State and local governments whenever such partnerships and cooperation are possible and would promote the employment and gainful economic activities of individuals with disabilities.

Section 4. Judicial Review

This order does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person.

Appendix B

USDA Statistical Data on Employees with Disabilities

Table 1.

In FY 1997, 6.79 percent of all Federal employees had a reportable disability compared to 8.24 percent at USDA. The USDA also exceeds the Federal Government in the percentage of employees having a targeted disability. Both the Federal Government as a whole and the USDA showed a relative decline in the employment of people with reportable and targeted disabilities over the last 3 years. This decline occurred over a time when the Federal Government experienced a significant downsizing. It can only be conjectured why the percentage of employees with disabilities has declined during this downsizing period. One reason could be that people with disabilities were more likely to seek early retirements or buyouts. An additional factor to review in the future would be the characteristics of those leaving the work force during the last 3 years and whether or not they accepted a buyout or early/disability retirement.

Both the Federal Government as a whole and the USDA showed a relative decline in the employment of people with reportable and targeted disabilities over the last 3 years.

Table 2.

In FY 1997, 1.16 percent of the Federal work force had targeted disabilities, compared with 1.24 at USDA. This table shows the distribution of these people by type of disability, between the overall Federal Government and USDA. The USDA is below the Federal Government at large in the employment of people with sight and hearing disabilities and of people who suffer from mental retardation. The USDA employment rates of the other disability categories exceed those of the Federal Government.

Table 3.

A considerably larger percentage of USDA employees received a promotion in 1997 than did employees in the rest of the Federal Government. The promotion rates for employees with disabilities at USDA were similar to the proportion of all employees promoted at USDA.

Table 4.

This table shows the percentage distribution of Federal and USDA employees by grade level for all employees and for employees with targeted disabilities. The average grade levels of the Federal white collar work force and USDA are 9.8 and 9.5, respectively, compared to 7.8 for people with targeted disabilities. This difference is significant. Several points can be made from this table. First, the percentage of the Federal work force in the GS-14 thru SES levels is nearly 11 percent compared to slightly over 6 percent at USDA. This more conservative number of senior-level positions at USDA results in a correspondingly lower number of people with targeted disabilities in these pay grades. In both the Federal Government and the USDA, the percentage of people with targeted disabilities in the GS-14 through SES grades is about half the level experienced by the rest of the work force.

Table 5. (Federal Government) and Table 6. (USDA) The first step in determining causes for the disparity in grade levels between all employees and people with targeted disabilities in the Federal and USDA work forces was to examine grade levels by disability. Some of the disparity is because the people with mental retardation are, on the average, employed at the grade 4 level compared to the overall average of 7.8. The characteristics of this disability will limit the number of people that will reach higher pay grades. However, none of the disability categories exceeded the Federal 9.8 or the USDA average grade of 9.5. People with hearing impairments have the second lowest pay grade levels both at USDA and in the Federal Government. The lower pay grade levels of people with mental retardation and with hearing impairments do not explain the difference in grade levels for people with targeted disabilities in the work force at large.

Table 7.

The next step in the analysis was to review education levels. The analysis was done only for USDA, as similar data were not available for the Federal work force. Table 7 shows the percentage of the USDA work force by disability status and by amount of education. The significant point shown by this table is that people with no disabilities have more education than do people with targeted disabilities. No information about the kinds of degrees by major course of study was available. What is not known is whether there are not enough applicants for the type of positions required at USDA or if USDA needs to more actively recruit. In other words, are people with disabilities as likely as people without disabilities to have a degree in forestry, economics, or some of the other science fields required by many USDA agencies?

Table 8.

This table shows job series of USDA staff by disability status, with a similar distribution to Table 7. The disparity in education levels is reflected by the larger percentage of people with disabilities in the clerical series, which does not have a positive education requirement, and the lower percentage in the professional and technical fields, which require more education.

Tables 9, 10 and 11.

These tables show the distribution of USDA staff by disability status for the following characteristics: age, time in grade, and length of service.

Generally, people with disabilities are distributed across the work force by age, length of service, and time in grade in patterns similar to people with no disabilities. One interesting point is that people with reportable disabilities tend to be distributed toward the older ages. This could be that the reportable disability does not appear until an older age, or because the person does not have the confidence to report it until an older age, or because the person was not aware it could be reported at the beginning of his or her career.

Table 12.

This table shows the distribution of people by disability status by USDA agency. The USDA as a whole has slightly over 1.2 percent of its employees with targeted disabilities. This table shows the agencies that meet, exceed, and fall below this level. This probably requires some careful review by all agencies from the point of view of their hiring and retention policies.

Table 1

Percent of Federal and USDA Employees by Disability Status, FY 1995-1997¹

	All Federal			USDA		
	1995	1996	1997	1995	1996	1997
Percent with Reportable Disability	6.93	6.81	6.79	8.45	8.37	8.24
Percent with Targeted Disability	1.21	1.18	1.16	1.27	1.26	1.24

¹Source: FY 1997 Annual Report on the employment of minorities, women and people with disabilities in the Federal government for FY 1995-1997 (EEOC).

Table 2**Federal and USDA Employees with Targeted Disabilities^{1,2}
Percentage Distribution by Disability Category FY 1997**

Disability	Number		Percent	
	All Federal	USDA	All Federal	USDA
Deaf	5,639	112	19.67	10.35
Blind	2,676	71	9.33	6.56
Missing Extremities	1,856	75	6.47	6.93
Partial Paralysis	3,694	273	12.88	25.23
Complete Paralysis	1,559	111	5.44	10.26
Convulsive Disorder	3,967	153	13.84	14.14
Mental Retardation	2,837	74	9.90	6.84
Mental Illness	5,622	173	19.61	15.99
Distortion Limbs & Spine	821	40	2.86	3.70
Total Number with Targeted Disabilities	28,671	1,082	1.16	1.24
Total Employees	2,477,444	87,392		

¹USDA has 3.53 percent of Federal work force and 3.77 percent of Federal employees with targeted disabilities.

²Source: Annual Report on the employment of minorities, women and people with disabilities in the Federal government-FY 1996 (EEOC).

Table 3**Percent of Federal and USDA Employees
Receiving Promotions in 1997¹ by Disability Status**

Promotions	Number		Percent	
	All Federal	USDA	All Federal	USDA
People Promoted Who Have Reportable Disabilities	16,493	1,454	9.87	20.19
People Promoted Who Have Targeted Disabilities	2,274	220	7.97	20.33
Total Number Promoted	249,461	19,265	10.14	22.46
Total Employment	2,459,660	87,392		

¹Source: Annual Report on the employment of minorities, women and people with disabilities in the Federal government for FY 1997 (EEOC).

Table 4**Comparison of Grade Levels of Federal (White Collar)
and USDA Work forces and Respective Numbers
With Targeted Disabilities, FY 1997**

Grade	Federal		USDA	
	All ¹ % of Total	Targeted ¹ % of Total	All ¹ % of Total	Targeted ² % of Total
1	0.02	0.16	0.02	0.29
2	0.09	1.06	0.06	1.43
3	1.09	5.99	0.33	4.09
4	4.08	14.25	2.35	13.32
5	8.74	15.03	7.30	14.37
6	6.61	8.11	6.57	8.28
7	9.42	9.62	15.88	12.75
8	2.98	2.75	4.25	2.66
9	8.96	7.75	16.07	10.37
10	1.22	0.88	0.68	0.29
11	13.12	10.93	15.48	11.99
12	16.36	11.37	15.28	11.80
13	12.24	6.22	8.95	4.76
14	6.23	2.47	3.87	2.38
15	3.54	1.37	1.90	0.86
SES	0.98	0.40	0.46	0.10
Other	4.33	1.65	0.56	0.29
Average Grade	9.8	7.8	9.5	7.8

¹Source: Annual Report on the employment of minorities, women and people with disabilities in the Federal government for FY 1997 (EEOC).

²Source: NFC Summary, June 1998

Table 5

Grade Level Distribution of White Collar Federal Employees With Targeted Disabilities - FY 1997¹

GRADE	Deaf % of Total	Blind % of Total	Missing Extremities % of Total	Partial Paralysis % of Total	Complete Paralysis % of Total	Convulsive Disorder % of Total	Mental Retardation % of Total	Mental Illness % of Total	Distortion of Limbs and Spine % of Total	All % of Total
GS-1	0.12	0.09	0.00	0.19	0.00	0.00	1.44	0.08	0.00	0.16
GS-2	0.29	0.28	0.26	0.48	0.75	0.60	10.36	0.65	0.55	1.06
GS-3	7.72	3.07	1.92	4.30	3.13	4.59	28.62	5.37	4.01	5.99
GS-4	23.50	9.40	6.97	11.85	10.95	11.44	33.03	13.76	11.48	14.25
GS-5	20.47	10.46	11.50	12.81	13.79	17.34	16.10	15.43	18.03	15.03
GS-6	10.71	6.24	6.62	6.68	6.11	9.29	4.72	10.34	10.75	8.11
GS-7	10.63	12.61	9.41	9.15	7.97	10.13	2.26	9.08	13.48	9.62
GS-8	1.99	5.64	2.09	2.67	3.20	2.59	0.82	2.40	1.09	2.75
GS-9	6.27	8.62	9.58	8.41	9.09	8.29	1.03	7.94	8.38	7.75
GS-10	0.33	0.41	1.83	1.25	1.12	0.00	2.36	1.14	0.73	0.88
GS-11	6.13	14.31	13.76	12.94	13.56	10.85	0.51	11.56	10.75	10.93
GS-12	8.14	14.22	17.60	13.84	15.05	10.65	0.62	9.61	8.56	11.37
GS-13	2.62	7.29	10.80	7.64	8.35	7.10	0.21	5.05	6.92	6.22
GS-14	0.33	3.17	3.66	4.05	3.20	2.35	0.10	2.20	1.82	2.47
GS-15	0.21	1.65	1.83	1.96	2.16	1.24	0.00	1.55	1.28	1.37
SES	0.04	0.64	0.70	0.48	0.82	0.28	0.00	0.37	0.36	0.40
Other	0.46	1.88	1.48	1.28	0.75	3.27	0.00	3.50	1.82	1.65
Average Grade	6.5	8.7	9.3	8.5	8.7	7.9	4.0	7.8	7.8	7.8

¹Source: Annual Report on the employment of minorities, women, and people with disabilities in the Federal Government for FY 1997 (EEOC).

Table 6

Grade Level Distribution of USDA Employees With Targeted Disabilities - FY 1997¹

GRADE	Deaf % of Total	Blind % of Total	Missing Extremities % of Total	Partial Paralysis % of Total	Complete Paralysis % of Total	Convulsive Disorder % of Total	Mental Retardation % of Total	Mental Illness % of Total	Distortion of Limbs and Spine % of Total	All % of Total
GS-1	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.37	0.00	0.00	3.45	0.00	0.00	0.29
GS-2	0.00	1.43	0.00	0.74	0.00	0.65	15.52	1.18	0.00	1.43
GS-3	5.36	1.43	0.00	2.60	3.60	3.25	31.03	0.59	2.63	4.09
GS-4	19.64	10.00	7.14	15.24	9.91	10.39	31.03	10.06	7.89	13.32
GS-5	22.32	12.86	12.86	11.15	16.22	18.18	10.34	11.83	15.79	14.37
GS-6	11.61	8.57	11.43	8.18	5.41	5.84	5.17	9.47	10.53	8.28
GS-7	11.61	14.29	15.71	10.04	12.61	14.94	1.72	15.38	23.68	12.75
GS-8	1.79	0.00	4.29	1.86	2.70	2.60	1.72	5.92	0.00	2.66
GS-9	8.04	4.29	5.71	11.15	10.81	13.64	0.00	15.38	10.53	10.37
GS-10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.74	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.59	0.00	0.29
GS-11	8.04	22.86	11.43	11.90	14.41	9.74	0.00	13.61	18.42	11.99
GS-12	9.82	11.43	17.14	15.24	17.12	10.39	0.00	8.88	5.26	11.80
GS-13	1.79	8.57	11.43	5.58	2.70	5.84	0.00	3.55	2.63	4.76
GS-14	0.00	2.86	1.43	3.35	4.50	3.25	0.00	1.78	0.00	2.38
GS-15	0.00	1.43	0.00	0.74	0.00	1.30	0.00	1.78	2.63	0.86
SENIOR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.37	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.10
OTHER	0.00	0.00	1.43	0.74	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.29
Average Grade	6.7	8.6	8.7	8.3	8.3	8.0	3.6	8.1	7.8	7.8

¹Source: Annual report on the employment of minorities, women and people with disabilities in the Federal government for FY 1997 (EEOC).

Table 7**Education Profile of USDA Employees June 1998
by Disability Status**

Education	No Disability %	Reported %	Targeted %	USDA %
Less Than High School	1.88	1.93	3.72	1.90
High School Diploma	21.11	21.85	22.74	21.15
More than High School Less than B.S./B.A. Degree	27.86	30.88	33.61	28.13
B.S./B.A. Degree	31.79	28.50	27.62	31.51
Graduate Studies, Advanced Degree	17.40	16.83	12.78	17.31
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 8**Job Series of USDA Employees by Disability Status - FY 1998**

Job Series	No Disability Reported % of Total	Reported Disability % of Total	Targeted Disability % of Total	Total % of Total
Administrative	20.21	21.47	20.22	20.30
Blue Collar	2.11	2.66	3.02	2.16
Clerical	6.08	8.91	23.54	6.48
Other	0.76	0.57	0.60	0.74
Professional	33.83	29.49	20.72	33.38
Technical	37.01	36.89	31.89	36.94
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

¹Source: NFC Summary, June 1998.

Table 9

Age Distribution of USDA Employees by Disability Status - FY 1998

Age In YEARS	No Disabilities %	Reportable %	Targeted %	Total %
18	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.02
19	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.06
20	0.08	0.02	0.00	0.08
21	0.16	0.09	0.10	0.16
22	0.21	0.16	0.20	0.21
23	0.32	0.24	0.20	0.32
24	0.39	0.28	0.10	0.38
25	0.60	0.24	0.30	0.57
26	0.79	0.38	0.50	0.76
27	1.02	0.59	1.11	1.00
28	1.23	0.56	1.21	1.19
29	1.27	0.56	1.51	1.22
30	1.35	0.71	0.80	1.30
31	1.56	0.99	2.01	1.53
32	1.60	0.80	1.61	1.55
33	1.88	1.43	2.82	1.86
34	2.14	1.43	2.62	2.09
35	2.27	1.64	2.82	2.24
36	2.56	1.79	1.91	2.50
37	2.81	2.02	3.82	2.76
38	3.06	2.21	3.02	3.00
39	3.06	2.16	3.02	3.00
40	3.34	2.00	3.72	3.25
41	3.65	2.75	3.52	3.59
42	4.03	3.17	4.73	3.98
43	4.06	3.24	3.32	3.99
44	4.36	4.07	4.12	4.34
45	4.33	3.78	4.93	4.30
46	4.36	4.25	4.02	4.35
47	4.31	4.35	4.63	4.31
48	4.21	4.72	5.13	4.26
49	4.27	5.24	3.72	4.33
50	4.18	6.01	4.93	4.32
51	4.25	5.36	3.82	4.32
52	3.00	4.18	2.62	3.08
53	2.89	4.04	2.82	2.97
54	2.71	4.23	3.02	2.82
55	2.48	3.81	2.31	2.57
56	1.96	2.70	1.41	2.00
57	1.77	2.37	1.91	1.81
58	1.49	1.86	0.40	1.50
59	1.24	1.85	1.21	1.28
60	1.05	1.41	0.91	1.08
61	0.82	1.43	0.50	0.85
62	0.65	1.20	0.30	0.68
63	0.56	0.85	0.20	0.58
64	0.39	0.64	0.30	0.41
65	0.34	0.68	0.91	0.37
66	0.21	0.35	0.20	0.22

Table 9 (continued)

Age Distribution of USDA Employees by Disability Status - FY1998 (continued)

Age In YEARS	No Disabilities %	Reportable %	Targeted %	Total %
67	0.17	0.30	0.20	0.18
68	0.11	0.19	0.20	0.11
69	0.08	0.16	0.00	0.09
70	0.06	0.07	0.10	0.06
71	0.05	0.10	0.10	0.05
72	0.04	0.09	0.00	0.05
73	0.03	0.07	0.00	0.03
74	0.03	0.05	0.10	0.03
75	0.02	0.05	0.00	0.02
76	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.02
77	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.01
78	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00
79	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.01
80	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
81	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
82	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
85	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00
86	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
89	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

¹Source: NFC Summary, June 1998

Table 10

**Time in Grade Distribution of USDA Employees
by Disability Status - FY 1998**

YEARS	No Disabilities %	Reportable %	Targeted %	Total %
1	15.18	13.58	14.13	15.06
2	12.03	10.81	13.43	11.96
3	10.15	9.98	12.25	10.16
4	7.69	7.15	7.77	7.65
5	8.23	8.00	8.83	8.22
6	8.53	8.84	8.48	8.55
7	7.05	6.72	6.36	7.02
8	5.74	5.99	4.83	5.75
9	4.65	4.34	4.59	4.63
10	4.14	4.11	3.30	4.13
11	2.30	2.50	1.77	2.31
12	1.76	1.85	2.83	1.78
13	1.66	1.87	1.53	1.68
14	1.43	1.89	0.24	1.45
15	1.29	1.38	1.53	1.30
16	1.11	1.57	1.30	1.14
17	1.50	1.89	1.53	1.53
18	1.17	1.43	1.53	1.20
19	0.93	1.02	0.82	0.94
20	0.69	0.83	0.47	0.70
21	0.55	0.69	0.59	0.56
22	0.50	0.77	0.71	0.52
23	0.41	0.59	0.24	0.42
24	0.39	0.69	0.12	0.41
25	0.29	0.59	0.24	0.31
26	0.12	0.20	0.12	0.13
27	0.14	0.26	0.24	0.15
28	0.10	0.16	0.24	0.11
29	0.07	0.10	0.00	0.07
30	0.05	0.06	0.00	0.05
31	0.03	0.02	0.00	0.03
32	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.02
33	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01
34	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.01
35	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.01
36	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
37	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00
38	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
39	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
40	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 11

**Length of Service Distribution of USDA Employees
by Disability Status - FY 1998**

YEARS	No Disabilities %	Reportable %	Targeted %	Total %
0	2.40	2.07	1.71	2.37
1	2.54	1.86	2.31	2.49
2	1.98	1.34	1.01	1.93
3	2.52	2.00	1.51	2.47
4	1.63	1.36	2.21	1.62
5	2.41	2.25	4.02	2.41
6	3.35	3.55	5.94	3.39
7	3.59	3.19	4.33	3.57
8	4.16	4.23	4.53	4.17
9	4.20	4.23	5.53	4.21
10	4.27	4.42	5.03	4.29
11	3.69	3.55	3.12	3.67
12	2.84	2.35	3.72	2.81
13	3.29	3.20	3.32	3.29
14	3.25	2.49	3.52	3.20
15	3.08	2.72	2.82	3.05
16	2.75	2.37	3.02	2.72
17	3.37	3.27	2.92	3.36
18	3.86	3.66	4.93	3.86
19	3.98	3.90	4.23	3.98
20	3.82	3.81	3.92	3.83
21	3.73	3.17	3.32	3.68
22	3.50	3.74	3.82	3.52
23	3.23	3.27	2.41	3.22
24	3.02	2.79	2.72	3.00
25	2.57	3.03	1.41	2.58
26	2.23	2.77	1.81	2.26
27	2.46	2.99	1.71	2.48
28	2.14	2.40	1.71	2.16
29	1.77	2.40	1.41	1.81
30	1.83	2.19	1.11	1.85
31	1.69	2.45	1.41	1.74
32	1.33	1.85	1.71	1.37
33	0.95	1.34	0.50	0.98
34	0.63	0.73	0.20	0.63
35	0.60	1.01	0.40	0.63
36	0.43	0.68	0.30	0.45
37	0.28	0.35	0.20	0.28
38	0.19	0.24	0.10	0.19
39	0.13	0.21	0.00	0.13
40	0.10	0.09	0.10	0.10
41	0.10	0.24	0.00	0.11
42	0.04	0.05	0.00	0.04
43	0.03	0.05	0.00	0.03
44	0.02	0.05	0.00	0.03
45	0.01	0.05	0.00	0.01
46	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01
47	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
49	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 12

**Disability Percent of Each USDA Agency's Employees
by Category, FY1998**

AGENCY	No Disabilities % of Total	Reported % of Total	Targeted % of Total	Total
AARC	100.0	0.0	0.0	6
AMS	93.4	5.4	1.2	2,572
APHIS	92.6	6.5	1.0	5,201
ARS	91.6	6.9	1.5	6,370
BCA	100.0	0.0	0.0	7
CSREES	92.5	5.8	1.7	347
DAMS	94.4	4.4	1.1	90
ERS	95.7	3.7	0.7	460
FAS	93.6	5.8	0.6	640
FNS	86.9	10.4	2.7	1,573
FS	92.6	6.2	1.2	27,959
FSA	90.4	8.1	1.5	5,528
FSIS	91.9	7.5	0.6	9,181
GIPSA	95.8	3.5	0.7	733
NAD	94.6	5.4	0.0	129
NASS	92.9	5.8	1.3	1,114
NRCS	91.8	7.1	1.1	11,126
NSIIC	100.0	0.0	0.0	1
OALJ	88.2	11.8	0.0	17
OBPA	97.1	1.4	1.4	69
OC	95.0	4.0	1.0	101
OCE	97.3	2.7	0.0	37
OCFO	89.6	8.1	2.3	1,666
OES	93.8	0.0	6.2	16
OGC	96.4	3.6	0.0	330
OIG	94.7	4.8	0.5	751
OO	88.7	8.3	3.0	505
OSDBU	100.0	0.0	0.0	8
PACC	91.1	7.9	0.9	214
RBS	92.2	6.9	0.9	116
RHS	90.7	8.1	1.2	6,227
RMA	89.3	9.7	1.0	506
RUS	91.0	7.3	1.7	354
SEC	93.0	4.7	2.3	43
TOTAL	92.0	6.8	1.2	83,997

Appendix C

Secretary's Advisory Committee for Employees with Disabilities Member List

Name	Agency/Title	Phone Number	Fax Number
Dan Glickman, Chairman	Secretary Room 200-A	(202) 720-3631	(202) 720-5437
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Appendix D

Acknowledgments

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Appendix E

TARGET Center Mission Statement

The TARGET Center is a part of Departmental Administration in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Center's mission is to support the Department's work force diversity and the Federal work force 2000 policies. The Center provides technology and information services to ensure equal access to electronic technology and automated systems essential to today's jobs. The Center assists in making information and microcomputer technology accessible to persons with disabilities for career enhancements. The Center supports USDA agency efforts to provide people with disabilities access to modern office technologies and thereby integrate them into the work force. The Center is available to all USDA employees in headquarters and regional locations, potential employees, and other interested individuals.

The Center serves as a focal point in USDA on a wide array of microcomputer technology resource information. The Center maintains an inventory of accessible technologies utilized by USDA agencies.


The Center conducts scheduled demonstrations on adaptable computer hardware and software technologies. Formal demonstrations are conducted as new workplace technologies are introduced. Presentations are hosted to inform managers and employees of advancing accessibility microcomputer technology.

The Center provides training programs for managers and employees concerning Federal regulations on accessibility, accessibility assessment, and possible solutions. Managers and employees are enlightened on the wealth of available products and the ease and benefit of providing accessible technology.

The Center facilitates needs assessments for persons with disabilities and recommends cost-effective solutions for the workplace. The Center provides advice on acquisition procurement for information systems and services.

The Center also tracks Federal and State initiatives regarding accessible workplace technologies. The Center serves as a liaison between the Department and computer industry, schools, Federal/public organizations, and associations.

The Center's staff assists employees, including detailed and regional personnel, by informing them of technology, and of Federal regulations and laws on accessibility for persons with disabilities. Through its comprehensive services, the Center strives to identify and address an individual's specific needs and matches them with appropriate technologies. The Center recommends accessibility policies for the Department and ensures that electronic technology in use at USDA accommodates the functional needs of individuals with disabilities.




The Center provides technology and information services to ensure equal access to electronic technology and automated systems essential to today's jobs. The Center assists in making information and microcomputer technology accessible to persons with disabilities for career enhancements.

Appendix F

Disability Employment Program

The Disability Employment Program (DEP) is within the Department's Office of Civil Rights. The DEP mission is to:


- Promote the recruitment, employment, advancement, and retention of people with disabilities, particularly those with severe (targeted) disabilities and of disabled veterans, with special emphasis on outreach to disabled veterans with a 30 percent or more compensable service-connected disability.
- Ensure nondiscrimination against people with disabilities and foster full participation in, and access to all, USDA programs, activities, and services.
- Provide technical support and assistance in providing reasonable accommodations for applicants and employees with disabilities.
- Develop and implement a continuing comprehensive approach to the Department's Affirmative Action Program for Individuals with Disabilities and the Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program.
- Provide technical employment information on the noncompetitive, excepted-service appointing authorities and assistance to applicants and employees with disabilities and potential employers.
- Ensure that qualified applicants and employees with disabilities receive the necessary work-related accommodations in order to receive USDA services and/or to carry out their job functions.
- Ensure compliance with legal obligations under Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 791), 29 C.F.R. 1614.203, and Section 3112 of Title 5 U.S.C., and Title 38 U.S.C. 2014.
- Dispel myths, fears, and misconceptions about people with disabilities by conducting disability awareness training to educate managers, supervisors, and coworkers on how to interact, respect, and work with people with disabilities.



The Disability Employment Program promotes the recruitment, employment, advancement, and retention of people with disabilities, particularly those with severe (targeted) disabilities and of disabled veterans, with special emphasis on outreach to disabled veterans with a 30 percent or more compensable service-connected disability.

Disability Employment Program Manager Designation

Each agency or mission area designates a Disability Employment Program Manager (DEPM) at the agency headquarters to carry out the affirmative action programs for individuals with disabilities and disabled veterans. The headquarters DEPM is to provide policy guidance, technical assistance, program implementation and oversight to field personnel. Some agencies appoint collateral duty DEPM's in the regional or field offices. The DEPM function can be full time or assigned as a collateral duty responsibility, devoting up to 20 percent of an employee's time to the program. DEPM's typically work in either human resources management or civil rights.



Each agency or mission area designates a Disability Employment Program Manager (DEPM) at the agency headquarters to carry out the affirmative action programs for individuals with disabilities and disabled veterans.

**U.S. Department of Agriculture Headquarters - Disability Employment Program Managers
(DEPM) September 1998**

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Appendix G

Sign-Language Interpreting Services

A sign language interpreter facilitates communication between deaf and hearing employees. Scheduling interpreting services in advance of a meeting ensures that people who are deaf or hard of hearing receive the same message as people who can hear. Any USDA manager or employee, whether hearing or deaf, may request an interpreter. To obtain sign language interpreting services in USDA offices in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, contact the Interpreting Services Office at (202) 720-3515 (voice) and (202) 720-7614 (TTY/TDD) or by FAX at (202) 690-0761. The Interpreting Services Office is located in Room 6448 of the South Building. Across the country, request information from local USDA offices describing how to obtain local interpreting services.



Scheduling an interpreter should be an integral part of the initial stages of planning for a meeting. If you are responsible for planning an agency-wide event, ceremony, training, or special program, be sure to make the request as far in advance of the meeting as possible.

Any USDA manager or employee, whether hearing or deaf, can request an interpreter. Please provide your name and telephone number, date of the event, beginning and ending time of the event, room number and building, type of activity, name of the agency, and the name and number of deaf employees who will attend, if available. Scheduling an interpreter should be an integral part of the initial stages of planning for a meeting. If you are responsible for planning an agency-wide event, ceremony, training, or special program, be sure to make the request as far in advance of the meeting as possible and coordinate all of the details with the Interpreting Services Office, such as lighting and placement arrangements, number of interpreters needed, and modes of communication requested. If videotapes will be shown, ensure that they are captioned and arrange for a television decoder. If microphones will be used and a deaf person will be speaking, provide an extra microphone for the interpreter. Advance copies of the agendas and handouts, especially if technical in nature, may also be needed.

Contact with the Interpreting Services Office should be maintained throughout the planning process and included in all meeting planning checklists.

